

SUPPLY OF WATER TO LONDON.

It will be remembered that at the end of last year a plan was propounded for bringing water to London from the River Thames, at Henley, promising to assure to every inhabitant of the Metropolis an unremitting supply of this all important desideratum within his own house. The opposition was manifold, and the bill was lost on the second reading. The promoters of that bill have, it seems, resolved on a fresh attempt, modifying their scheme so as to be rid of some of the opponents, and they propose to place the management of the undertaking in the hands of a representative commission. Water is to be brought from Henley by means of an aqueduct (not a canal, as at first intended), and to be delivered into a reservoir at Hampton, high enough to supply the loftiest buildings, and extinguish fires without engines. We are not at this moment in a position to assert that their plan for supplying London with pure water is the best suggested, but we do say that the importance of the subject is such, and the necessity for water is so great and paramount, that the proposal ought to receive the most candid and careful consideration. When it is known that at the present moment there are 70,000 houses in London, containing not less than 550,000 inhabitants, which have no water supplied to them from any one of the eight great water companies which exist, further argument must be unnecessary. All London ought to cry as loudly as if next door were on fire—"Water! water! water!"—*Builder.*

"VENO BENO"

MANY of our readers have, doubtless, lately observed on the walls of the metropolis some singular looking placards bearing the above inscription, without further explanation. The solution to this mysterious announcement is now given by the appearance of a new article of consumption called, "*Veno Beno*," and intended to add strength and flavor to tea in a similar manner that chicory is now used in coffee. Whether the tea will be improved by this novel addition we are not prepared to assert; but as the subject is now attracting the attention of the scientific and curious, we give the following information from the pages of our able contemporary, *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*:

Veno Beno is described as the leaf of a tree; but we are informed (whether correctly or not, we cannot tell) that it is the leaf of a climbing plant well known to the farther East by its name of *pau*; but we have nothing about the effect of the adulteration ourselves; but with a consumption of thirty or forty million pounds of tea in the year, the *veno Beno*, supposing it to be *pau*—if it comes even into comparatively moderate use in this country, may have a sensible effect upon the commerce of the Indian Archipelago.

The *pau* is one of the pepper-trees; and though a native of the Archipelago, and the adulterant of the continent, has become naturalized in India. There the better kind of it, called *cote*, receives very careful treatment, being grown under a thin covering of reeds, sprinkled frequently with water; while in the Archipelago, the slender plant (there named *siwei*) is allowed to climb the palms at its own will, rejoicing in the sea breeze, and in the moisture of an eternal spring. It is described by Lindley as producing intoxicating effects, stimulating powerfully the salivary glands and

"HOW TO MAKE THINGS PLEASANT IN AN OMNIBUS.—Take a bull-dog in with you, or a couple of babies; or produce a pistol, and quietly cock it; or take the 'Hos and Cry' out of your pocket, and as you read it, look most intently at the features of every person in the omnibus."

"HOW TO FIND HIGH-WATER AT LONDON BRIDGE.—Draw a tumbler of Thames water from your own cistern. If dog's hairs float at the top, it is high-water. If sticklebacks sink to the bottom, it is low."

"LADIES OF ENGLAND, ANSWER THIS.—If the man is a wretch who lifts his hand against a woman, what must the woman be who raises the hearth-brush against a man—and that man her husband?"

"ADVICE TO SPONGES.—The uninvited guest, who 'drops in' the thirteenth to dinner, may make up his mind to the following catastrophe; that either the mistress of the house, or himself, is sure to be 'put out,' and perhaps both."

digestive organs, and diminishing the perspiration of the skin. To this we may add, that in India it is prescribed by the native doctors as a tonic, to be taken immediately after dinner in cases of weak digestion. Having a pungent aroma, and being of a warm stimulating nature, something like cayenne, and other herbs of the kind; it is also given in conjunction with pills and other medicines. The leaf is likewise placed not unfrequently, after being warmed at the fire, on the head of a newly-born infant, for the purpose of giving it sleep, and abating the superfluous humors of the system.

The *pau*, however, is better known as forming a part—some think the most important part—of the Oriental luxury, *bétel*, so called from the nut, which is the most solid ingredient. The *bétel* is the fruit of *Arceuthobium*, and is said to possess a narcotic or intoxicating power, although the probability is that this power resides rather in the *pau* leaf, in which it is wrapped. The other ingredients are gambier—extracted from the *Uncaria gambir*, to give sweetness and stringency—and slaked lime, which brings out a bright colouring matter from the leaf, and transfers it to the tips of the consumer. This is an important point in the ceremony of chewing *bétel*. The tips of both sexes are constantly dabbed with the sanguine juice; and a Malay lover compares the mouth of his mistress to a breck in the side of a ripe pomegranate! The opulent add to the ingredients already named such spices as cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, cardamom, &c.; and a few portions of tobacco to increase the stimulus. Habit renders the *bétel* still more a necessary than a luxury. The Asiatic nations would rather forego meat and drink than this savoury mouthful, which occasions a gentle excitement to those accustomed to it, and to novices a stupefaction. Blunze considers the practice to be favourable to health in the damp regions where it prevails, and where the natives live upon a sparse, and frequently unwholesome diet. Even the poor are obliged to economize; a dose two or three times a day, generally after a meal, being all the poorer classes can obtain, although a couple of leaves are enough for what may be termed the quid. The wealthy chew it at all hours and seasons; and it is among the artificers introduced—such as after of brass and other perfumers—as a signal for a guest to take his leave, after partaking of the hospitality of a Hindoo gentleman.

Gossip at the Bay.

THE proposition made by Mr. Gile, through the London newspapers, to endeavour to discover the whereabouts of Sir John Franklin by a balloon ascent, has called forth, in Paris, a letter from M. Dupuis Delacour, alleging that the first idea of such an ascent in the polar regions was made by him in a publication nearly twenty-five years ago, and was repeated in another publication in 1848, and that he did not call M. Gile's attention to it as robbing the English Government of his merits, graciously avowing that he is about to promulgate a project for undertaking the circumnavigation of the globe by means of balloons; and he says that he shall appeal to the Government, to foreign and national academies, and to other learned bodies, for the means of executing his project. As we cannot get any farther beyond that state of uncertainty, we will give the *crossing of the Alps in a balloon* as deemed a marvellous exploit—it may be doubted whether the Frenchmen's scheme will meet with much encouragement. The dreadful death of the scientific but ill-fated aeronaut, M. Arago, whose recent memorable exploit of crossing the Alps in his frail machine must be fresh in the recollection of our readers, has thus accounted for by the English aeronauts.—It is considered that the dreadful accident arose either from some defect in the machinery of the valve, from the expansion of gas, or from some other cause, the balloon burst; or that M. Arago, finding himself over the waters of the Bay of Biscay at Barcelona (his body being found on the shore) effected a rapid descent, and experienced a violent fall from the car. This might also be occasioned by the balloon coming in contact with a high tree or rock, which would produce such a tremendous concussion that the aeronaut might easily be dashed from the car to the ground. The balloon not being found may be thus accounted for.—Being relieved of the weight of M. Arago's dead body, it ascended, and returned to sea, or far inland. That "Columbus of the skies," as the veteran Green has been facetiously termed, in conjunction with a scientific gentleman, G. Rush, Esq., of Epsom Hall, Essex, has lately been making experiments by ascent with the newly-invented aneroid barometer, for the purpose of inducing the discovery of the cause of the late accident, and for the purpose of ascertaining at Birmingham, and despatching balloons for the discovery, by means of his balloon, of Sir John Franklin and the missing Arctic expedition. Mr. Gypson has also been lecturing with great success in the provinces; and Mr. H. Coxwell, the editor of the "Aeronautic Magazine," has recently returned to town, after a most profitable continental tour, derived by ascents and lectures, and twice with medals and other honours from learned bodies; while Mr. Charles Green, Jun. (a son of the veteran), has lately been making ascents on Sundays from the celebrated Hippodrome, at Paris. Mr. and Mrs. Graham, so popular as aeronauts in days long past, are about to re-enter the lists next season, a new and beautiful balloon having manufactured expressly for their account.

It is stated, on the authority of Sir F. Kelly, that since the commencement of the present century upwards of forty persons, male and female, have been hung who were entirely innocent of the crime laid to their charge.

THE Queen is extremely systematic, and makes a point of superintending personally all the arrangements for the comfort and improvement of her children, reading all the books which are procured for their use, and acquainting herself with the characters of those who have charge of them.

It is said that galleys can be used for large printing letters, and that impressions can be obtained nearly as clear as the impressions from metal types.